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Mabel Burns McKinley

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Canadian Heroines
of
Pioneer Days

By
Mabel Burns McKinley

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To the Boys and Girls of Canada

Canadian Heroines of Pioneer Days, which is the first book to be issued in the Maple Leaf Series, is especially dedicated to you, the Boys and Girls of Canada.

We hope through these stories of Heroism, Hardship and Loyalty you may more fully understand how much had to be endured by the Early Pioneers of Our Country. May it help you to give to Canada your loyal support for all things which are worthy and for the betterment and expansion of our Dominion.

The next little book which we hope to publish will be Canadian Heroes of Pioneer Days to be followed by stories of the lives of our great Poets, Authors, Musicians, Artists, Historians and those who, through sacrifice and hard effort, have made our Canada what it is today.

THE EDITOR.

December, 1928.

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Canadian Heroines

Madame de la Tour

"The enemy is coming! The enemy is coming! What shall we do?" cried an agitated soldier to Madame de la Tour.

"We will defend the fort! Of course we will defend the fort!" replied Madame de la Tour. She was a brave woman, and although she had only fifty soldiers under her command, she resolved to do what she could to keep Fort St. Jean from falling into the hands of the enemy. She would fight until her husband, who had gone to Boston, returned with help.

Madame de la Tour and her husband were living in Acadia, now called Nova Scotia. Their headquarters were at Fort St. Jean, the present St. John. They had a bitter enemy, Charnisay. He and de la Tour had been fighting for the control of the colony for several years.

Shortly after de la Tour had set out for Boston, eight of the soldiers in Fort St. Jean and

several friars deserted because they were dissatisfied. They crossed the Bay of Fundy in an old ship and came to Fort Royal, the stronghold of Charnisay. He welcomed them gladly for he was delighted to have deserters from his rival's fort. He fed them, gave them money and treated them very well indeed.

These deserters told Charnisay that Madame de la Tour was alone in Fort St. Jean while her husband had gone away for aid. Charnisay questioned as to how large a force was in defence of the fort. When he heard that there were only fifty soldiers he thought he could easily beat a woman who had no more than that under her command. He decided to attack at once before de la Tour returned.

This was the news that had been carried to Madame de la Tour, and it was in answer to it that she had made the brave reply, "Of course we will defend the fort!"

When Charnisay arrived with his men, he expected to capture the place in no time. What could a woman and a handful of soldiers do against a superior force under his own leadership! But he was mistaken! Brave Madame de la Tour was everywhere, cheering her soldiers and urging them to greater efforts.

"We must drive them away!" she cried. "They must not take the fort!"

So well did the little garrison do her bidding that the enemy soon found out it was a difficult task they had before them. They were not succeeding, and after thirty-three men had fallen, Charnisay withdrew his army for the time being. However, he kept his ship in the harbor where he could prevent anyone going to the assistance of the fort.

While Madame de la Tour was thus bravely defending her home, her husband, Charles de la Tour, had sent a message to her with a merchant from Boston. The latter was to tell her that de la Tour would return in another month. But Charnisay had a blockade that did not allow any person or boat to pass without his permission. He seized the messenger and sent him back to Boston and Madame de la Tour never knew of the message that had been sent to her.

Charnisay again made an attack against the fort. But again the courage of its brave leader inspired the garrison. They fought nobly and Charnisay could not capture them nor gain an entrance to the fort. He knew he was beaten and was on the point of going away when treachery from within gave him an opening. One of

the guards of Fort St. Jean accepted a bribe Charnisay had sent him. He forgot his duty to Madame de la Tour and sold her and all his comrades for the money the enemy had given him.

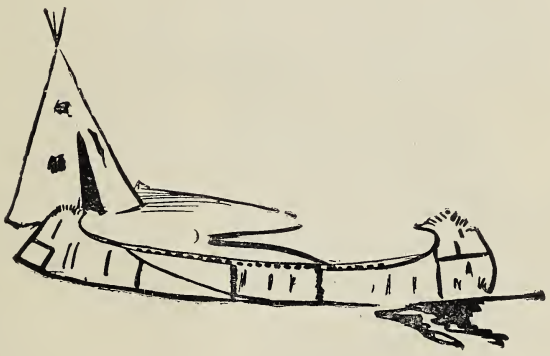
This treacherous guard let Charnisay's men in through the outer walls. The fate of the fort was settled. Once the enemy was inside there was little chance for the defenders. But Madame de la Tour held out for three days and nights, fighting desperately. She hoped that her husband would come with aid. Finally, despairing of help arriving in time, she thought by surrendering to her foe that she could save the brave soldiers who had fought with such courage.

"I will surrender if my men are spared!" was the word Madame de la Tour sent to Charnisay.

Charnisay agreed to this, and the little force defending the fort gave up their arms. Charnisay came blustering in. What! was this wretched line of defences all that had kept him and his army out so long! Was this remnant of men the force that had held him at bay for so many weeks!

He was very angry. He stormed with rage. Instead of admiring the courage and endurance of the defenders of the fort he was filled with

hatred. He forgot he should be a gentleman. He forgot his word of honor to spare the helpless, unarmed garrison. He ordered them all to be hanged. His cruel temper caused him to have a halter placed about the neck of the brave lady who had defended her home against him, and thus tied, she was compelled to stand by and see her gallant soldiers executed. It was too great a strain for poor Madame de la Tour. She fell fainting to the ground. Sick and weary at heart she was taken very ill, and three weeks later died.



Madeleine de Verchéres closing the door of the Fort against the Indians.

Madeleine de Verchéres

Many years ago when only a few people lived in Canada, a young girl of fourteen went one day for a walk. She strolled to the bank of the river which flowed past the fort where she lived. It was only a short distance from her home to the riverside. As she stood there, talking to an old man—one of her father's servants—she looked up and saw a band of Indians. They were not friendly Indians. They were dressed in their war-paint, and it was quite plain they were on the war-path.

When Madeleine—that was the young girl's name—heard the fierce war-whoops she knew that her life and the lives of those within the fort were in danger. Her father and nearly all of the soldiers were away. There were only two left to guard the fort.

But she was a brave girl and did not waste time by allowing herself to be frightened. She

ran as quickly as she could to the fort, calling out: "The Indians are coming! The Indians are coming! To arms! To arms!"

The savages also ran toward the fort. But Madeleine and the old servant reached there ahead of them. Madeleine helped shut the gate and fasten it. Now they were safe for a few minutes. The Indians, when they saw that their surprise had failed, waited to plan some other attack.

Madeleine looked for the two soldiers who were to guard the fort. They were the only men there except the old servant and Madeleine thought they would surely be at the loopholes firing at the enemy. But she did not see them!

Where do you think she found them? When the war-whoops of the savages had reached their ears they had been dreadfully frightened. They did not want to fall into the hands of the Indians, and so they run into a dark corner and hid. One of the soldiers took a match and lighted it. He was going to set fire to a keg of gunpowder and blow them all up.

As soon as Madeleine saw what the man was doing she seized the match and blew it out. Then she scolded the two soldiers for hiding.

"Why did you run in here?" she asked them. "You are two grown men and should be out helping us."

When she talked to them in this manner the men were ashamed. They hurried out after her and said they would do whatever she told them to do. So Madeleine took command of the fort just as her father would have done if he had been there.

She had two younger brothers, one ten years old and the other twelve. These boys along with the old servant had been fixing the pickets of the high fence that closed in the fort. Now she called them to her, and said:

"Here is a gun apiece for you. Go to the loop-holes and fire at the Indians."

"They will kill us if they get in, won't they Madeleine?" said the younger of the two, bravely shouldering his musket the way he had seen his father do.

"Yes, indeed!" answered Madeleine. "But we are not going to let them get in. We will fire our guns and make them think the fort is full of soldiers."

Madeleine ordered the two soldiers to fire the canon. The soldiers were ashamed of their

cowardice when they saw how brave Madeleine and her two young brothers were. They went at once to do what she wanted and presently boom! boom! roared the canon.

"Ah!" said the Indians. "There must be a great many soldiers in the fort. We had better move slowly."

The savages went off to one side to hold a council-of-war. Just then Madeleine looked out and saw a canoe coming to the landing place. In it were a settler and his family. (They had left their farm when they had learned that the Indians were on the war-path. They were coming to the fort for safety.)

"Oh! How can we help them?" Madeleine cried when she saw the boat. "The Indians will surely kill them before they can reach the fort. I know what I shall do. I will go to meet them. The Indians will think I am trying to play a trick on them, and they will not come too near."

Madeleine ran down to the riverside and hurried the settler and his family into the fort. Not an Indian stirred while she ran to the river landing and back. They thought there was a trap of some kind laid for them when they saw Madeleine rush out, fearless of danger. So it

was that by her bravery Madeleine saved the settler and his family.

When darkness fell Madeleine said to her helpers: "We must not sleep to-night. The Indians are always worse after dark. They will try to take the fort. We must be on guard and make them think we have a great number of soldiers here."

She told them where to go. Her two young brothers, the old servant, the two soldiers and the settler were given positions in different parts of the blockhouse and fort. Madeleine herself went with them. All night long the brave little company remained on the look-out. All night long the cry of "All's well!" passed from mouth to mouth. The Indians outside thought there must be a large force of soldiers in the fort. They did not think they could storm the pallisades with that number of defenders. So when morning came the fort was still safe.

But Madeleine and the others were very tired. For twenty-four hours the young girl had not slept nor had she taken time to eat a good meal. However, she felt encouraged to think that the savages had not succeeded in taking the fort.

"If we kept them out last night we can do it

again," she said. "We must not give in. If we hold out long enough we shall have help."

But it was hard work for the two small boys, the old servant, the two soldiers and the settler, to stick to their places. They were tired and sleepy. But Madeleine spoke to them, urging them not to give up. Day by day they took their positions at the blockhouse and fort, and day by day the Indians hearing their cheery "All's well!" and seeing the heads passing and repassing around the defences were sure there were ever so many soldiers stationed there. They thought their only chance of taking the fort was by waiting until they could surprise those inside.

Before they could manage the surprise they were planning, help came from Montreal. A party of soldiers came to the relief of the fort and its brave defenders.

The officer in charge could scarcely believe that a young girl like Madeleine had been in command and had been so wise. He said that no one could have done better.

As soon as the Indians saw the soldiers come, they ran away. They knew they would not be able to take the fort now. Madeleine and her brothers were very glad to see them go. It had been a hard week for them all.

We will always remember Madeleine de Verchères because of the courage she showed. Even a young girl can have the bravery to defend her home if danger threatens it. How proud her father was of her when he returned home and found out what had happened!

Mademoiselle Jeanne Mance

A little fleet of boats left Quebec and made its way up the St. Lawrence River on the eighth of May, 1642. There was a flat-bottomed vessel with sails, and two row-boats. In one of them was Jeanne Mance.

The days went by and on the tenth day they neared the end of their journey. Jeanne pointed to the shore where early spring flowers bloomed among the grass and said to her companion, Madame de la Peltrie, "It is a beautiful country. Here we will be happy with our work. We shall convert the Indians and build a hospital in which their diseases may be cured."

"It is indeed a beautiful country," agreed Madame de la Peltrie.

"Listen to the song of the birds," continued Jeanne, "they are bidding us welcome."

"Yes. Nature smiles upon us. I hope the

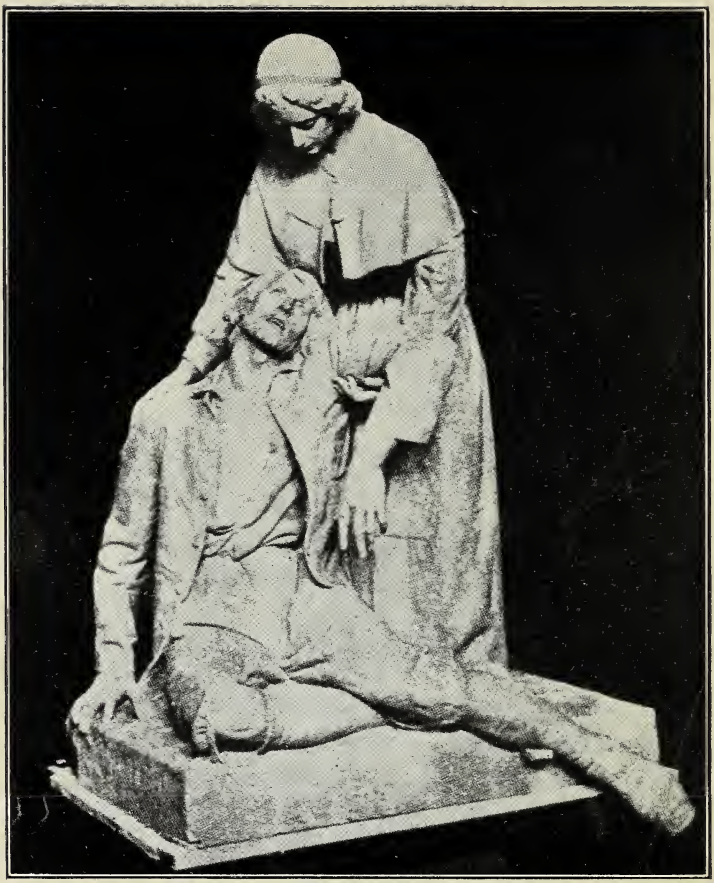
Indians will be friendly and the Iroquois do not come near."

"Ah! The Iroquois!" Jeanne sighed for a moment. She had only come to Canada a short time before, but she had heard during her stay of the dreadful things the savages had done and how terrible was their treatment of those who fell into their hands. But Jeanne Mancé was courageous. She had come all this distance from her home in France to help the Indians and she was not going to be discouraged.

When the boats came to land at the place where the great city of Montreal now stands the leader of the expedition, Sieur de Maisonneuve, jumped on shore. The others followed him and they all knelt to give thanks to God for bringing them safely to the end of their journey.

That evening the little party gathered around a campfire. The tents were pitched and an altar erected. It was a lonely spot. The nearest fort was at Quebec, a ten-days journey away. But these brave men and women were filled with hope for the future.

"Here we will build our hospital," said Jeanne, "and I shall be in charge. The Indians as well as our own sick and wounded will be treated and cured of their ills."



Jeanne Mance with one of the wounded soldiers.

The flames of the camp-fire mounted higher and higher, and then died down while Jeanne Mance and Madame de la Peltrie talked of their plans for the coming years. Little did they think, as they talked, that the small building to be erected would be the beginning of a great hospital that centuries after would stand on the self-same site, one of the most important buildings in Montreal, the Hotel Dieu.

The next day the men began to cut down trees for the houses and fort. The hospital was not to be built just yet. They must first have homes and a fort to protect them against the raids of the Indians. The dreaded Iroquois had not discovered that the little band of palefaces were settled near the village of Hochelaga, and so there was no warfare for the present.

Jeanne began to wonder if there was any need of a hospital after all, for everything seemed peaceful. She wrote to her benefactress in France—the generous woman who was giving money for the work in the new settlement—and asked her if she might take the money for missionary work among the Hurons. But word came back that the funds were to be spent only for one purpose and that was for a hospital.

It was not long before such a building was

sadly needed. Hostile Indians had found out that the little band of white people were in this unsheltered spot. The savages gave them no peace. Once they had learned that there was only a handful of soldiers and a few settlers and women in the new fort they did everything in their power to annoy them. The Indians did not come in large numbers and try to take the place by force. They acted in a different way. They waited in ambush, behind the trees in the forest, and pounced upon the white men who went out to cut down trees or to bring in wood for fuel. They sprang out from these hiding-places upon the settlers who were trying to till the ground and plant the grain.

Jeanne Mance's hospital was soon filled. To be sure, some of the men were either killed by the Indians or captured and taken away to be tortured and these had no need of her care, but many were only wounded and were able to get to the shelter of the fort. There she tended their wounds and did what she could to help them.

Trying days followed for the small settlement at Montreal. The redskins would sometimes wait for a week at a time in the forest on the chance of catching someone unawares. Once, while a young colonist and his wife were working in the

field not far from the fort, they were surprised and surrounded by the savages. The husband was instantly killed and scalped, and the wife was taken prisoner. Those in the fort tried to rescue her but in vain and Jeanne Mance saw her countrywoman carried off by the redskins. She heard her cries as they put her to torture and finally burned her to death. There was only one safe place and that was behind the pallisades of the fort.

These terrible doings worried Jeanne. She finally asked Sieur de Maisonneuve, their leader, to go to France and bring back a company of soldiers to protect Montreal. She offered him twenty thousand francs which had been given her for the hospital. She felt that without colonists to keep the savages in check there would soon be no colony at Montreal and no need of a hospital. In return for the gift of money a grant of land was given her for the soldiers and settlers to occupy.

Sieur de Maisonneuve went to France and was away for two years. In the meantime the Indians grew bolder and bolder. The hospital was not nearly large enough to hold all the sick and wounded who came to it. Jeanne felt she should

have a larger building. She also needed milk for her patients and wool to make cloth.

"I shall write again to my benefactress," Jeanne said to herself. "I shall tell her what we require and I believe she will send the necessary things.

Jeanne was right. In due time there came from France money for building and furniture, carpets, bedding and other things. To her great joy there also came three cows, two oxen and twenty sheep. From now on her patients could have fresh milk and woolen clothing.

At the end of the two years Maisonneuve returned with a hundred picked soldiers and a supply of money which was used to strengthen the fortifications. The coming of the soldiers and the fortifying of the settlement saved Montreal from being abandoned. The defenders had felt they could hold out no longer but the arrival of these reinforcements quickly changed the state of affairs.

Jeanne Mance continued her hospital work and in addition taught many of the Indian boys and girls. She died in 1673 after a life given wholly to the new country which she had adopted as her own. There is a statue in the Place

d'Armes, Montreal, of Sieur de Maisonneuve surrounded by other pioneers of that city, and among them is the figure of heroic Mademoiselle Jeanne Mance.

Laura Secord

"The bridge has gone! The bridge has gone! How shall I be able to cross the stream?" Laura Secord stood on the bank of a stream. Heavy rains had swollen it and had washed away the bridge.

Laura had been walking since daybreak. The roads were muddy. The fields were soaked with water. It had been hard to walk in the mud, but Laura had kept on. No matter how tired and weary she was she did not stop. When it seemed as though she could go no farther she would say to herself:

"If I do not warn our people the enemy will surprise and kill them."

The night before she had been at her home in Queenston. Her husband was sick in bed. He had been wounded when fighting the army which had invaded Canada. The enemy had come to Queenston, and some of them were quartered at

Laura Secord warning Fitzgibbon of the planned attack against him.

the Secord's home. These soldiers were talking of what they were going to do the next day. They intended to surprise the leader of the Canadian forces, Lieutenant Fitzgibbon.

"Oh! If only I were not ill," moaned James Secord. "I would go and warn Fitzgibbon. It is terrible to be helpless like this when I should be hurrying off to tell him."

"Do not worry, James!" Laura spoke resolutely, "I will go! I will carry the news to Lieutenant Fitzgibbon!"

"But you cannot walk that distance——it is too far! Besides, it is dangerous! The woods are full of Indians! There are wolves and other wild animals!" James Secord groaned aloud.

"Never mind about me! I will manage somehow!" his wife nodded bravely. "At break of day I will be off! Our people must be warned!"

So it was that Laura had walked mile after mile through the dense woods. In places she had to go through swamps. She had to wade across streams. She had to watch for Indians and parties of the enemy. It was a trip full of danger, but she had gone on, covering mile after mile. If she were not delayed, she would reach the camp in time to warn Fitzgibbon.

But now Laura had come to this stream and the bridge was gone. How was she to cross to the other side? Some way or other she must get over!

"Ah! What is that!" she murmured. She walked along the bank. "It is a fallen tree! It lies across the stream! Perhaps I can go over on it!"

Carefully Laura crept on to the tree trunk. Carefully she balanced herself. Inch by inch, on her hands and knees, she crept slowly along. The tree was steady. It did not turn nor move and upset her into the stream. She did not let herself become dizzy. There! She had passed over and was standing on the other bank. She had lost one shoe in the swamp and the other in crossing Twelve Mile Creek by means of the fallen tree, and so she had to continue barefoot.

Drawing a deep breath the brave woman started on again. But her dangers were not yet over.

Suddenly she was in the midst of a band of Indians. When they saw her the braves started up and rushed toward her, yelling their ear-splitting war-whoops.

Many were the tales Laura had heard of the cruelty of the Indians. The settlers knew to

what dreadful torture the savages put those who fell into their hands. During the war the Indians had been even more cruel than before. It was indeed a terrible situation for the footsore and weary woman.

But Laura did not lose her presence of mind. She must have courage if she were to deal with the Indians. She looked quickly at the band of yelling savages and saw one whom she thought would be their leader or chief.

At once Laura beckoned to him. She got his attention, and by signs indicated that she must see Fitzgibbon without delay. She made him understand that she had an important message for the leader of the British forces. Even the safety of the Indians themselves might depend upon it!

It was fortunate that the band of Indians were allies of Fitzgibbon's, and that Laura had been able to explain her errand before the savages had harmed her.

They led her at once to Beaver Dam. That was where Fitzgibbon and his small force were camped.

Fitzgibbon was very glad indeed to get the news Laura had brought. He knew that, unprepared, he would have no chance with the few men

he had against the enemy, which numbered nearly six hundred. But now that he had been warned of their coming he would meet them. He would station his men so that they would surprise the foe.

Fitzgibbon placed his Indian allies in the woods. He hid them behind trees and bushes. When the enemy appeared they thought there were many soldiers ready to fight them. So they surrendered.

Brave Laura Secord had served her country well!

Marguerite de Roberval

Marguerite stood on the shore shading her eyes as she looked out to sea. If only she could catch a glimpse of a ship! If a sail would only come in sight! But there was nothing save the vast expanse of water. Once or twice she had seen ships far out on the rolling waves. They were such a distance away, however, that the sailors did not notice the lonely maiden. They never dreamed the dreaded Isle of Demons was inhabited by any human being. It was a desolate place, shunned by sailors and fishermen who did not want to go to its barren rocky shores.

This day Marguerite was on the point of turning away when her heart gave a sudden jump. Could that be a sail? Could that speck against the horizon be a ship? She strained her eyes and raised on tiptoes to see the better.

"Oh! It is a vessel! It is a boat!" she cried joyfully. "I can see it! Oh! If it will only come this way!"

For nearly three years Marguerite had been living on the Isle of Demons in the Straits of Belle Isle. She had been on a ship with her uncle Sieur de Roberval, going from France to Canada. She had vexed her uncle because of her wish to marry one of the cavaliers who was too poor to be acceptable to her family. This young man had come on board secretly for he did not want to be separated from Marguerite.

The cruel uncle was very, very angry. He gave orders to have a ship's boat lowered. In this boat he had Marguerite and her nurse placed. They were taken to the desolate Isle of Demons and left there. The heartless uncle went on his way, not caring what happened to them.

The young man was not permitted to go in the boat with Marguerite and her nurse, though he pleaded to accompany them. But he made up his mind he would not be left behind. When the ship started again on her course he jumped overboard and swam to shore, where he joined Marguerite and her nurse, who were gazing in despair after the departing vessel.

The two young people made a hut to shelter them from the storms. They had guns and some ammunition. The few provisions the soldiers

had left for them were soon eaten. However, they were able to shoot enough wild fowl and catch enough fish to keep them from starving. They made their clothing from the skins of the wild animals that roamed the island.

It was a hard life. The old nurse could not stand it. She sickened and died. So did the little baby who was born, and the young husband. Marguerite was left alone on the bleak island.

She had watched and watched for a ship to appear. Several times she had seen them but they were too far away for her signals to be noticed. Once she had been frightened by a canoe load of Indians. She saw them coming toward the island and the sight of their war-paint and tomahawks alarmed her. She ran from the shore with cries of terror. The Indians saw her but they did not believe she was a human being. They were afraid, thinking she was the spirit wife of their great Manitou and would bring great misery upon them. So they turned their canoe and hurried away. Marguerite was glad to be rid of them. She would rather be alone and half-starved on the desolate island in the Straits of Belle Isle than be in the power of the Indians. She had heard tales of the cruel way they often tortured helpless prisoners who fell into their hands.

Marguerite grew desperate as the months passed by. There seemed little hope of being rescued. She decided to make a canoe for herself and in it try to get away. She had never built a canoe before, nor had she helped with one. It was entirely new work to her and of course she could not make one that was safe. After it was completed Marguerite started off but she was able to get only a short distance before the canoe upset. Marguerite swam to shore and her heart sank with discouragement. There was no use trying to build another boat for she could not make one that was seaworthy.

The only thing she could do was to wait and watch. She had looked over the rolling waters day after day, but no ship came near the island. This day, however, the boat she had seen drew nearer and nearer. It did not do as the others had done, pass away out of sight.

"Oh!" cried Marguerite. "It is coming this way! I must light a fire! They will not see me unless I do!"

She ran to bring the wood she had piled up in readiness for the coming winter. It had been hard work cutting the sticks and carrying them to the hut. But she knew she would surely perish during the cold weather if she did not have

a supply of fuel ready at hand when the storms came. There was not any too much of it either, but Marguerite recklessly heaped stick after stick on the fire she had built. She must attract the attention of the fishermen in the boat.

The flames rose higher and higher. With trembling hands Marguerite added more wood. The courage that had kept her through so many trying months did not desert her now. She ran up and down the shore, waving her arms so the men could see her.

They noticed the fire and then they observed something running back and forth on the shore. What could it be? Was it a human being or was it one of the spirits the people of that day imagined inhabited the Isle of Demons? This all happened many many years ago in the middle of the sixteenth century and the sailors and fisher folk believed many strange superstitions. One of these was that the Isle of Demons was haunted by evil spirits who did harm to the boats that came too near. They thought there were terrible creatures in the waters around the island, and that hideous demons with wings flew about on land.

The fishermen in the small boat were puzzled. Could this object be one of the demons trying to

coax them into its clutches? Or could it be a human being?

They were brave and courageous, those fishermen. They did not turn and run away. They steered a course straight for the fire that burned so brightly on the beach. They were going to find out what it meant. As they came closer they discovered the form of a maiden, dressed in the skins of animals, who was beckoning to them. They remembered a story they had heard of Roberval's niece. Could it be possible that the story had been true? They kept on and presently could see clearly the imploring figure of Marguerite.

"It is not a demon. It is a poor forlorn woman," said one of the fishermen pityingly.

The kindly men took Marguerite into their boat. She was saved at last. No longer was she doomed to remain alone and forsaken on the Isle of Demons.

At first it seemed almost too good to be true. Marguerite could hardly realize she was not to return to the bleak barren shores where she had battled against storms, cold and hunger, wild beasts and loneliness for so many months. But the fishermen were kind to her and in a short time she began to forget all the terrible things

through which she had gone, and was ready to smile again.

When she reached France, after being away for nearly three years, she had to hide away in the country. Her cruel uncle was angry at her return and would have done her harm, but she kept out of his way for several years. At last Roberval was sent again to Canada, but his voyage met with disaster. He and all that were with him perished. When he did not come back to France Marguerite felt secure. She came out from her hiding-place and lived happily for many years. She told her story to the king's sister and the latter wrote about it in her tale called "Heptameron".

Abigail Becker

The wind had blown all night. It had made the waves of Lake Erie rise higher and higher. It was not safe for a boat to be out in the storm.

In the morning Abigail Becker rose at daybreak. She and her family lived in a small cottage on the shore of the lake, near Long Point. She left her children in bed, and went down the path that led to the beach. She carried a pail with her for she was going to bring back water from the lake.

When Abigail dipped her pail into the water she saw a piece of broken board coming in on the breakers. As soon as she saw it she knew something was wrong. It was the plank of a ship, and Abigail knew what that meant. There must be a ship somewhere on the lake that had been wrecked in the storm.

Abigail looked across the angry waves. Yes!

There was something! It was the top of a schooner.

"Oh dear!" she sighed. "That boat has been wrecked! The sailors will be drowned! What can I do?"

Her husband was away. There was no one but herself and the children near at hand to help the crew of the doomed boat. But she resolved to do what she could. She ran back to the house and when she had opened the door she cried to her children to wake up.

"There is a ship wrecked on the reef!" she told them. "We must do what we can to help the sailors!"

In a few minutes Abigail was off again. She gathered driftwood and bits of sticks. With these a fire was started on the beach. Soon it was burning merrily. On went more driftwood and the flames flared high.

Out in the lake the captain and crew of the ship were clinging to the rigging. During the night the boat had hit a sunken rock. The water had rushed in. The men had to climb to the rigging to keep out of the water. The wind blew the spray of the waves over them. It was so cold that they were soon covered with a coating of

ice. Through the long hours of the night they hung on! But how much longer could they cling to the ice-covered masts? They were almost giving up hope when they saw the fire Abigail had kindled on the shore.

"They will have to swim ashore," Abigail said to herself, as she piled another armful of wood on the fire. She stood looking at the wreck. There was no boat near at hand, and even if there had been it would have been of no use. The big waves would have upset it.

Abigail put her hands to her mouth and called to the sailors. But they could not hear her. The wind howled and shrieked and nothing could be heard above its din.

At last Abigail waded out into the water. She raised her arms and pointed to the sailors, then to herself and to the fire on the beach. She wanted them to jump into the water and swim to land. She was ready to help them.

The captain understood her signals. He knew what she meant and he decided to try. If he and the others remained where they were they would surely die, so he was willing to make an attempt to reach the shore.

He jumped into the lake and tried to swim. But he was tired from hanging on to the rigging

Abigail Becker wearing the medal which was given her for her bravery in rescuing the shipwrecked sailors.

for so many hours in the terrible wind and cold. Down he went! He would have been drowned if Abigail had not swum out to meet him. She caught him and brought him in to shore.

"Drink this!" she said, as she handed him a steaming cup of hot tea.

When the mate saw that the captain was safe on shore he thought he might also be saved. He too jumped into the water! Now the captain saw him jump. He knew what a hard task it was to swim ashore. He knew that Abigail had saved him but did not think she was equal to saving another. He would not listen to Abigail when she urged him not to go to the help of the mate.

He plunged in. Then Abigail had a hard time. She had to save both men. The captain did not have enough strength left to battle with the waves. Both he and the mate would have been drowned if she had not found them and brought them to shore.

Abigail placed them beside the fire and gave them hot tea to drink. Then she signalled to the sailors on the wreck, and called: "Come on! Swim, and I will help you!"

One at a time the men dropped into the lake. Abigail waded into the water. She swam. She

dived. With great courage she kept on. No matter how tired she was she went again and again. The water was freezing cold. The wind buffetted her. The waves almost overwhelmed her. But Abigail was brave and strong. One by one she brought the sailors safely to land. By and by she helped them up the path and into her cottage. There she gave them warm food and shelter.

It was a very brave thing that Abigail Becker did. She did not think about herself. She did not heed the cold and the biting wind. Her one thought was to save the sailors from the wreck. When people heard about the rescue they praised her, and said what a wonderful thing she had done. But Abigail did not agree with them. She said she had only done her duty.

Madame Hébert

Redskins stood by the fire in the kitchen of Madame Hébert's home. They liked the warmth of the cheery flames. The Huron braves, squaws and children were much interested in the Hébert farmhouse. They would come and stay by the hour watching her at work. Everything was clean and tidy. They could not understand how any place could be so neat and clean. They liked to see and examine the curious articles of furniture. They had nothing like them in their wigwams The house itself, built of stone which Louis Hébert had cut out of the mountain, was a source of wonder. They came and stayed until the good housewife was at her wits' end to be rid of them.

"How am I to work with these Indians in my way!" Madame Hébert exclaimed. "They are around all the time and I dare not leave for fear they will steal some of the things we need. They

steal with their feet as well as their hands. I know what I shall do. The clock will send them away."

The Indians had never seen a clock until the white men came. It seemed to them a very wonderful thing. They had a name for it. They called it the "Captain of the day", and when it struck the hour they thought the Captain was speaking. They had asked the white men what it said and had been told that when it struck four o'clock on a winter afternoon it said, "Get out! Go away, that we may close the door."

Madame Hébert knew the Indians believed that the clock when it gave forth four sounds was saying, "Go away!" so she used to remind them of this and the friendly redskins would at once leave. They did not care to disobey the magical clock. They thought it was alive and able to speak and hear. Sometimes they would go behind it to see whether anyone was there making it talk.

There was a great deal for Madame Hébert and her family to do. They could not spend their time with the Indians or their crops would be a failure. The Hébert farm was near the fort Champlain had built in the Upper Town of

Quebec, and although the soil was fertile it had not been cultivated before.

Madame Hébert had a garden near the house and she was very busy during the summer planting and tending the vegetables she and her family required for food. There were cattle in the sheds nearby, and when the men were working in the fields she helped with the chores about the farm.

The cottage or farmhouse had a fence around it, not an ordinary one but a pallisade made for protection. If a band of Iroquois came to kill and plunder they found the fortified farmhouse more than they could manage. Many of the settlers ran there for refuge when pursued by the savages.

Not only the settlers but travellers and traders always found a ready welcome at the farmhouse. The Indians delighted to come, and many of their babies and children were given a Christian baptism while held in Madame Hébert's arms. The cottage was a hospitable place and the thrifty farmer and his wife soon had the land yielding a plentiful harvest. They were the first real farmers in Canada.

It was in April, 1617, that Madame Hébert had left France with her husband and children.

Madame Hébert and her children.

The ship in which they crossed the Atlantic did not run by steam as now-a-days. Its sails were at the mercy of the wind. The journey took so long that the food gave out. They had to use the supply of provisions they were taking to the colonists at Quebec. By the time they reached there nothing was left but a barrel of pork and the few stores the Héberts had brought for their own use. But they were ready to share with their hungry neighbors and willingly divided what they had with them.

The trip had been a long, slow one. Weeks and months were spent on the water. They were frightened by immense icebergs which appeared suddenly out of a fog. They had never seen anything like these before. The huge mountains of ice, breaking up into smaller pieces, came toward them. They were only saved by the skilful manner in which the captain of the ship steered among the floating masses. If he had not turned aside and coasted beside them the ship would have been ground to atoms.

One day in July, 1629, Quebec was handed over to the English by Champlain. The two countries, France and England, were at war and when the English came in force against Quebec Champlain found he could not hold the fort with the small number of men under him, so he surrendered.

Now Madame Hébert was under the British flag. Many of the colonists returned to France with Champlain but she preferred to stay in Canada. She had a good home, her fields and garden bore well, her children were with her and life in the New World was better, she thought, than in the Old.

She and her family continued to till the ground and gather in the harvests. They were quite happy under the English rule, but of course longed to see their own countrymen. Finally after three years the war between France and England came to an end and the Treaty of St. Germain gave Canada back to France.

Madame Hébert heard the good news and when the ships which were bringing the French back to Quebec were expected to arrive she gave orders to prepare a hearty welcome for them.

"Let our flag wave high from the house. Let us all be ready to do honor to those of our nation who are coming to us."

The flag floated out on the breeze. When the fleet sailed in sight of the cliff at Quebec those on board saw it, and gave a hearty cheer, for at this sign they knew that the colony was still existing. Though most of the houses were in a ruinous condition Madame Hébert's buildings

showed what a thrifty, hard-working woman and her family could accomplish in spite of many handicaps.

They had their ups and downs, but they worked hard and the soil repaid them for their labor. Once Madame Hébert had an unfortunate experience with her fruit trees. She and her husband had planted them, thinking to have some fruit in the new country. Success had attended their efforts and in due time the trees were ready to bear. But the Indians, having obtained a supply of liquor, were unruly. They came to the Hébert farm and killed all the cattle. Then they began at the apple trees. They wanted the fruit and in order to get at it easily they tore the trees up by the roots.

Madame Hébert felt very badly. "Why did you do this?" she asked them.

The Indians, now sober, were sorry they had treated so badly one who had never harmed them but had always been their friend.

They said, "It is not we who have done this, but the people who have given us this drink."

Madame Hébert's eldest daughter, Anne, was the first white woman to be married in Canada. She was married to a young French trader, and

hers was the first wedding ceremony in the new land among the colonists. This was a few months after the Héberts landed at Quebec. The second daughter married Monsieur Couillard and a street in Quebec city still bears the name, Couillard Street.

Madame Hébert lived to a ripe old age. Her husband, Louis Hébert, died ten years after they came to Canada. The little colony owed much to the work of this pioneer woman.

Marie Anne Lagimoniére

One day an Indian woman, the wife of a Blackfeet chief, stole away from Fort of the Prairies. She had in her blanket a pretty, fair-haired, blue-eyed baby. She had stolen the little boy and was trying to take him to her wigwam.

The child's mother, Marie Anne Lagimoniére, had gone to the river for water. It was not very far away and she had left her six months old baby and her little girl at home while she went. During her absence the Indian woman had seized the baby, wrapped him in the blanket she had on her back and had hurried off to rejoin the rest of her tribe. When Marie Anne found out that her small son was missing she started in pursuit, crying, "My baby! My baby boy! Where is my baby!"

Marie Anne and her husband, Jean Baptiste Lagimoniére, had travelled with the fur traders to the Northwest. They had reached the West in 1807. Marie Anne was the only white woman in

that country. The Indians had never seen white-skinned children before and they greatly admired the two who belonged to the Lagimoniéres.

They liked the baby boy. They thought his golden hair, blue eyes and fair complexion very wonderful. Some of them wanted to keep the beautiful smiling child whose coloring and features were so different to those of their own children. The Blackfeet chief and his wife were especially fond of him. The Indian woman could not resist the temptation to run away with the baby.

At that time the country was not settled as it is to-day. Tribes of Indians roamed the prairies and the foothills. There were only a few scattered forts of the Hudson's Bay Company and a handful of fur-traders. When Marie Anne realized that her little son was gone she was nearly beside herself. She set out at once to find him.

Ahead was the Indian woman with the precious infant. Marie Anne followed, her heart beating wildly. She must catch up to them. If the woman managed to make off with the baby she would hide him somewhere and his father and mother would never see him again.

Finally she caught up to the squaw and demanded her child. What joy to have him safely in her arms once more, to feel the little soft cheek pressed against her own! The Indian woman would not admit that she had stolen the child and had intended to keep him. She said she had only taken the little boy in order to play with him for a while. But Marie Anne knew better. She felt sure that if the Blackfeet woman had been successful in getting away with the baby she would never have found him.

This was not the only time the Indians tried to get possession of this same child. Once when the Lagimoniéres were on the prairies the chief of the Assiniboines came to visit Marie Anne and her children. When the savages saw the baby boy they exclaimed in wonder at him. They had never seen so beautiful a child before. The chief made up his mind he would have the little boy. But he did not attempt to take him by force. He offered to buy him. Marie Anne did not know the Indian language well enough to understand all he was saying but the meaning of his signs and actions was clear.

The chief brought the best horse he had and led it to Marie Anne. Then he motioned as if to say: "You take my horse, my valuable horse, and let me have your baby in exchange."

Marie Anne said, "No! No! I will not give up my baby."

The chief saw her shake her head and he thought the offering he had brought was not sufficient. So he led another horse to her and indicated that he was willing to give two horses for the little white baby boy.

But Marie Anne said over and over again. "No! No! I cannot part with him! I cannot sell my baby for any number of horses."

"Will you let me have him if I give you all my horses and one of my children besides?" begged the chief.

Marie Anne was frightened. She and her husband were in the depths of the Indian country and she feared what the chief might do. She cuddled her small son in her arms and broke into tears.

When the chief saw her cry he must have felt sorry for her because he did not urge any more. He took his horses and went off in company with his people. After that he did not make any more attempts to take the white woman's baby away from her.

Part of the time Marie Anne and her family lived near the trading post of the Hudson's Bay

Company called Fort of the Prairies. This was situated on the spot where the city of Edmonton now stands. Here the Lagimoniéres remained during the winter months, but in summer Jean Baptiste took his wife and children with him to the plains.

When the snow was on the ground Jean trapped wild animals and earned a living by selling or trading the furs. While he was busy in this way Marie Anne stayed at home and cared for the children. Part of the time she lived in a hut made of logs. The openings between the logs were filled up with moss. The floor was just the hard surface of the ground, there were no boards or carpet. The door had a covering of buffalo skin, and the window was made by putting a scraped skin in a wooden frame.

Sometimes her home was merely a tent or wigwam. Once, during the winter of 1817-18, she had to live in a hole dug in the ground. There had not been time to build a house before the cold weather came so her husband scooped out the earth and put a thatch roof over the opening to protect them from the storms.

Later on she and her husband joined the Selkirk colony on the banks of the Red River. They were there when the terrible flood came. The

river rose and rose until it was thirty feet above the ordinary level. The settlers gathered on a hill some six miles west of Fort Garry (Winnipeg). The Lagimoniéres were obliged to leave their home. They were on the east side of the river and the only spot they could find was a bit of rising ground. Here they stayed while the waters swirled around them. They had only a few provisions and Marie Anne dealt them out slowly. She was afraid they would not have enough to eat and her children would die of starvation.

The water rose until they were surrounded by it. When almost in despair they noticed that it was not rising any more. Then it began to recede. Finally the flood ceased and the river, instead of raging across the land, flowed between its banks once more, and Marie Anne and her family were able to return to their home.

It was a hard life this pioneer woman led, but she was cheerful and brave. She travelled with her small family many, many miles in the far Northwest, over the prairies of the Saskatchewan and Assiniboine districts. She lived a long time, until she was ninety-five years old. During her lifetime she saw the Northwest settled and when she first went West she was the only white woman in those parts.

Mrs. Shubert

"Hush-a bye baby!" A lullaby song crooned softly on the evening air. Mrs. Shubert was lulling her baby to rest. She was the only woman with the party which had set out from Fort Garry on June 2, 1862, in search of gold. She was accompanying her husband on the long trip across the prairies and the Rocky Mountains.

"Gold has been found! Gold has been found on the Cariboo!" had been the cry that had started the men on that long dangerous journey.

Camp had been pitched. Mrs. Shubert and her small children were in their tent. The cart in which they had ridden all day was with the other carts forming a sort of fence or barricade against possible attacks of the Indians. The carts were arranged on three sides like a triangle and the animals were placed inside the enclosure. They did not dare risk having them stolen by lurking bands of savages.

Night came on. A guard of six men kept watch, and the rest of the party slept. One of the babies was restless and Mrs. Shubert wakened. After soothing the child she glanced out into the darkness. She thought of the dangers of the trip. There were Indians and wild beasts to be met; rivers to be forded and mountains to be crossed. It was enough to dishearten even a brave woman, but Mrs. Shubert resolutely put her thoughts on other things. She resolved not to be fearful and to trust that all would turn out well.

At two o'clock in the morning the guard roused the camp for it was time to be on the move. At six o'clock they halted for breakfast. After an hour's rest the forward march began once more. Dinner brought a resting space, then on again until camp was pitched for the night.

Day after day they travelled. The prairie seemed endless. At last they reached Edmonton and here they rested for some time.

With a fresh supply of provisions the party started on. They were anxious to be at the end of their journey. Their way was blocked by fallen trees and logs. Swamps were impassable. In places a road had to be made through the

Fort Garry from where Mrs. Shubert started on her long journey west.

bush. Six of the men went ahead to cut out the trees and underbrush.

Many times when Mrs. Shubert looked at her little ones her heart sank. It was a terrible journey for a woman and children. But she did not falter. She had started out with the idea of making a home in the new country for her small family and she was not going to be discouraged. Cheerfully she bore the hardships of the trip.

Once during August the whole party were obliged to travel for ten days in clothes that were dripping wet. Rivers had to be forded over and over again in order to make any progress. Mrs. Shubert's little children could not understand why they had to be so uncomfortable. They did not like to wear wet garments. But every night the men built a roaring fire of logs and an attempt was made to dry the clothing.

At last, on the fifteenth of August toward the close of the day, Mrs. Shubert heard the men shouting and cheering. She looked out to see what was the reason for the glad sounds. Then she too saw in the distance that which had caused the men to break into expressions of joy.

"Look! Look!" she said to her children. "Those are the Rocky Mountains! We are in sight of the mountains!"

She pointed to the high peak of the Rockies. They were many, many miles away but she could see the snow shining on the tops of them. The children opened their eyes wide and gazed also. They did not know what it all meant but they knew their mother was glad about something and that made them happy.

Mrs. Shubert knew that the dangers and trials of the trip were not over. They had to cross the mountains and that was a very difficult undertaking.

The trail became harder and harder to follow. Once they had to pass along a narrow ledge where the mountain wall rose high on one side while on the other there was a drop of several hundred feet. Mrs. Shubert shuddered when she saw the danger and hugged her children closer to her. One step too far to one side and they would fall to their death.

After many days of weary travel, part of which time they did not have enough to eat, they came to a place where the party had to separate. Mr. and Mrs. Shubert and their children decided to go with the ones who were planning to descend the Thompson River.

Their way lay through thick woods; and trees had to be cut down before they could get through.

They could only make five or six miles a day. It took them a long time to reach the Thompson River.

They had a perilous journey down the river. They built rafts and tried to navigate the river with them. There were rapids to be run. One of the rafts was broken to pieces on a rock.

For days they struggled on. Finally they came to a spot where they learned there was a trail leading to Fort Kamloops. There was still over a hundred miles to go before they could arrive at the Fort. Their provisions were gone and they did not know how they were going to manage for food.

Fortunately they came across a field of potatoes. The hut beside it was empty and no one lived there. They cooked enough potatoes to satisfy their hunger and so were able to continue their march. The party finally reached Kamloops, after a journey of nearly three thousand and six hundred miles. Several of the men lost their lives on the way but Mrs. Shubert and her children came through safely and lived many happy years in their new home.

Elizabeth McDougall

The storm raged fiercely. A strong wind blew the snow in blinding swirls. The stars were blotted out by masses of dark clouds. Stinging cold whipped like a lash. The vast prairie land was covered with snow. In the shelter of a clump of spruce trees a white woman sat beside a campfire, keeping watch. Her husband lay unconscious on the spruce boughs near her. The Indian brave who was with them slept the sleep of exhaustion.

"I must keep the fire burning. It must not go out or we shall perish," Elizabeth McDougall murmured to herself. She heaped on more wood and the flames danced upwards.

Elizabeth McDougall and her husband, John McDougall, were on their way to their new home at Pigeon Lake. They were nearing Fort Pitt. The winter storms had come early and they had found it difficult to travel with a wagon and cart

through the deep snow. The day before had been a hard one. John McDougall and the Indian Neche had broken the trail for the horses and carts. When night came they were tired but camp had to be made. They were in the hollow of a creek bed and there they decided to remain. Higher up the bank was a grove of spruce trees but it meant a hard pull to take the wagon up the slope. On this account, as there seemed to be no sign of a storm, they had pitched camp in the valley.

The snow had been cleared away. On the cleared space spruce boughs had been placed to serve as a mattress. Wood had been cut for a fire and supper cooked. Then the weary travellers had lain down to rest.

During the night there came up a wild storm. The air was very cold, the wind bitter and penetrating. John McDougall and the Indian Neche had been working very hard all day, breaking trail. They were soon fast asleep. By and by they wakened and realized they were both chilled to the bone. They knew they would soon freeze to death if they did not move, for their present position was in the direct path of the storm.

Telling his wife not to stir, John McDougall and the Indian crawled out and climbed to the spruce thicket. Here they fixed a place to protect them from the violence of the storm, and built a roaring fire.

While the men were busy arranging the new shelter Elizabeth McDougall remained in the hollow which was now under a deep blanket of snow. She could feel the weight of it becoming heavier and heavier every moment. The wind howled as it blew the snowy particles into every crack. She was obliged to lie still and wait. This was her first journey in the Northwest and she was not accustomed to the dangers and hardships that had to be met.

It was terrifying to be alone in the storm and darkness, not knowing what might have happened to the others nor what would happen to her. Elizabeth McDougall was brave. She did not give way to her fears. If she had become panicky and had gone in search of her husband it is likely she would have lost her way in the blinding snow storm. She would have perished with cold. It required wonderful courage and self-control to remain quietly where she was and wait, as her husband had told her to do, for his return.

After what seemed to her a very long time her husband came back. How glad she was to hear his voice!

While he went ahead taking part of the bedding, she followed him up the slope. The drifts were deep and the wind was so strong she could scarcely battle against it. It was a struggle to make headway; at times it was almost impossible, but finally they reached the spot where the fire blazed brightly.

The men had brought up a kettle and a bag of provisions. Soon they had a pot of steaming hot tea. John McDougall had only taken one mouthful of the hot fluid when he fell back unconscious. This was a terrible moment for his young wife. What could she do?

She stooped down and listened to his breathing. She knew he still lived. If he could only be kept warm she thought he would recover. So she wrapped him up with the bedding as well as she could. The Indian too, she saw, was almost spent with fatigue. She motioned to him to rest and sleep. Then she sat down on the spruce logs to keep watch. Every little while she put more wood on the fire. It must be kept steadily burning.

The night seemed endless. While she kept her

lonely vigil the storm raged around her. It was daylight before her husband regained consciousness. What a relief to her when he opened his eyes! What happiness to know that the chill of the previous evening had not done him serious harm!

The rest of the journey was completed in due course. They had left Portage la Prairie on the fifteenth of October and they reached Pigeon Lake the end of December.

A few months later Mr. and Mrs. David McDougall joined them. In 1873 they settled on the Bow River near what is now known as Calgary, building the first house of that settlement. For many years Elizabeth McDougall and her sister-in-law were the only white women in Southern Alberta. The Indians were around them on all sides. Sometimes the two women and their children had to remain alone while their husbands went away on business, or to purchase supplies.

On one of these occasions a party of Blackfeet Indians on the war-path rushed into their house. They were with difficulty persuaded to leave. Then the door was closed and barricaded. The two women, one with a breech-loading shot gun and the other with the axe, the only weapons

they could find, stood guard through the long hours of the night. On the following day the Blackfeet Indians went away and the two brave women were very glad that they did not have to stay on guard to protect themselves and their humble home, but could go about their daily tasks in safety and happiness.

The End.

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